Targets for forests cover

4333. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the percentage of total area of the country covered by forests;

(b) the percentage of forests covered 25 years and 50 years ago;

(c) what targets are fixed by Government in this regard; and

(d) what are the plans of Government to achieve the same ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU) : (a) and (b) The assessment of forest cover in the country has been done biennially since 1987 and so far seven assessments have been made. During this period, the forest/tree cover has decreased marginally from 19.46% to 19.39% of the total geographical area of the country. Figures of forest cover prior to 1987 are not available.

(c) The National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages that the national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the total area under forest/tree cover.

(d) The Government of India have formulated a National Forestry Action Programme to increase the forest/tree cover to 33% of the total geographical area of the country in 20 years.

Assistance to Himachal Pradesh for Development of Forests

4334. SHRI ANIL SHARMA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of assistance provided to Himachal Pradesh for development of Forest regions during the Eighth Five Year Plan; and

(b) the amount of financial assistance proposed to be allocated for this purpose during the Ninth Five Year Plan.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU) : (a) and (b) Under the major centrally sponsored schemes of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, an amount of Rs. 2,017.57 Lakhs had been released to Himachal Pradesh during the 8th Plan for development of Forests. During the 9th Plan, an amount of Rs. 1274.99 lakhs has been sanctioned out of which Rs. 916.24 lakhs has been released till date.